

*i hate being called
"sister" and many
people are hurt by
rape who are unlikely
to b. called that,
but i couldn't resist.
-kh

I wrote this zine when I realized that many of my fellow anarchists and radicals did not share the core values and beliefs about sexual assault that I thought we did. I thought it was a part of anarchist basic training: hate cops, believe the survivor, smash the state, hold assailters accountable. Somewhere, a disconnect has occurred.

Maybe it's the basic hypocrisy that underlies many of the things we say: hate cops (unless someone steals from you), smash the state (except when we're too afraid of repression to act), stop rape (unless that requires more action than rhetoric). Maybe it's the rapid transition between anarchist "generations": so many of those who came before you are too burned out and alienated to attend to your education. Maybe it's the systematic silencing of survivors and feminists by the patriarchal structure of our society, seeking to undermine the forces that are the biggest threat to it. Who needs COINTELPRO when you have anarchists like these?

There are three parts to this zine: DIY dealing with assault; things people say about assault and accountability that I hate; and some questions about the basic conflicts and solutions of anarchist justice. While I don't actually know the absolute truth or the correct way to behave, I do have strong opinions about it. To save the time of qualifying myself, I will state those opinions as fact. As a survivor of sexual assault, a perpetrator of interpersonal violence, a female-socialized person, a feminist, and someone who has been trying to fight this

stupid bullshit for a long fucking time, I think I have the right to do so. If you feel personally attacked by this zine, rest assured that it is your ideas rather than you that I am attacking.

This zine will be triggering. I have tended to use the word 'rape' throughout, rather than the less triggering and more encompassing term 'sexual assault'; because I feel that the very ability to talk about this subject with such dispassion is dangerous. If you are often triggered by discussions about rape, I recommend making sure you have any resources you need before reading this.

I am a person who has always lived in the United States and often passes as white and hetero. While I grew up broke, I am from relative financial, educational, and class privilege compared to nearly everyone else in the world. I am writing about my experiences dealing with mostly white, mostly privileged anarchists. Limitations exist.

I also make a lot of comparisons to other situations and struggles in this zine, which I know is dangerous ground. I intend no disrespect to them, and have tried to be cautious throughout, but if a comparison is offensive, please tell me and I will try to amend it. I find comparisons useful here because many people have developed solid politics around issues they see as important from a revolutionary standpoint, but have never thought to apply that same analysis to rape. It's time.

--khalil kerblammetz, 2008

structures we suppose. Few people other than the bosses really want all the stupid shit that goes on, they just don't recognize their power to change things. Our role is to empower each other to think and act for ourselves, work with our communities towards new solutions, and come up with ideas together and try them. Luckily, we don't have to have all of the answers right now, since we aren't filthy commies trying to tell other people what to do. But we ought to **think** about them, and try. Otherwise we're just sitting around with our thumbs in our asses, which is fun but not very productive.

epilogue

When every survivor is met with support, when every perpetrator is expected to be accountable and wants to be accountable, when rape is taken seriously and seen for what it is, when everyone tries not to commit harm except in self-defense, rape culture will end. This is just as much a part of the revolution to me as states toppling and corporations becoming a thing of the past. I hope our children live to see it.

khalil kerblammetz

2008

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anarchist justice and larger society

I think it's important to work towards justice even now, in our embryo communities, because the violence that happens affects real people who deserve justice, and because if we are working for a larger future we need a good basis to start from. So what does anarchist justice look like in the so-utopian post-revolutionary future? Or between here and there? How do we intervene in the thousands of injustices happening now without using the legal system? How do we intervene in the legal system that we object to the entirety of?

Every struggle is torn between addressing the immediate problems (say, working for prison reform) and fighting the larger issue (spreading the idea of prison abolition). The first is effective in a certain sense (those particular prisoners are no longer beaten by that particular guard), but seems pointless in the face of the thousands of new people pouring into the system, and all the resources capital and the state have to draw upon. The second is appealing in terms of moral purity and getting to the root of the problem, but hard to apply and nearly futile-seeming (how exactly do you get people to tear down the prison walls, anyway?).

I believe that both approaches are simultaneously necessary. We can't turn away people in immediate need, or we are no better than the tyrants we oppose. We can't sacrifice or keep silent our core beliefs, or all our work is for nothing. But we also need to form practical working models, both in theory and in practice, to supplant the

you tell me why I stand guilty and accused
you tell me when I'm beaten and abused
when it's my body that's been raped and
defiled
you tell me why I'm the one on trial
-aus rotten, "the second rape"

dealing with an assault as a community

These are the things I think we need to know and do, as a minimum. Without a grip on them, we're at the least ignorant and at the worst evil.

- Rape is unbelievably, horribly bad. It is never funny. It is never less than a big deal. It's different for everybody. If you have not been raped, you do not know what it's like, no matter what else has happened to you, no matter how much you've read or how many survivors you know. Don't have the presumption to act otherwise.
- Believe survivors. 98% of all reported rapes are real. Almost no rape is made up. The damage done to the survivor by not being believed is so great, so common, and so insidiously a part of our society that there's no point in disbelieving someone. If you can't believe someone in a particular instance, keep your mouth shut and get the hell out of the way.

- We live in a rape culture. The physical act of rape, the ever-pornographically-focused-upon and debated moment, is only the tip of the iceberg. Patriarchy, white privilege, straight privilege, race, class, genocide, colonialism, capitalism, property, histories of oppression, new exciting forms of oppression being invented on the daily—these are both what informs the physical act and what it sustains. The anarchist subculture is just that, a derivation from the larger society, and suffers from the same maladies; we are not immune. In a way, we are all survivors and all perpetrators, simply by benefiting and suffering from the society we live in. Don't think that lets you off the hook for specific acts, though.

Survivors have the right to make any demand they want. Any. At this point someone usually brings out the bugaboo of murder or torture, but you forget that the survivor is not the wrongdoer here; they are not the ones who have been shown to be prone to violence. In the hundreds of situations I've heard about or experienced, in the one-in-three and one-in-six ratios surrounding me, no survivor has ever wanted the perpetrator killed. Sometimes their friends do, but their desires aren't as important to fulfill as the survivor's. Usually survivors want to make sure

may or may not care? Do we empower a squad of people to deal with it, and how do they do that? Is that different than cops?

- What do we do about people traveling from town to town, evading attempts to hold them accountable and escaping range of our ability to send warnings about them? What about people who quit being anarchists, but not perpetrators?
 - What about the fact that most accountability processes don't work and most survivors never feel satisfied or safe?
 - Isn't it questionable when people from a greater place of privilege than the perpetrator are trying to hold them accountable? What do we do about that?
 - What do you do about someone who ultimately refuses to change? Expel them from the community, knowing that they may still hurt someone somewhere and you won't be there to ever do anything about it? Punish them? Put them in isolation, and say it isn't prison?
 - What about perpetrators with mental disabilities or psychological issues? Issues of understanding and ability to be accountable come up here.
- Depressing, right? But that's no reason to give up. We can figure this out; we've only just begun trying.

ever-present exceptions, and while people have been slowly figuring out what to do about them, the answer is far from perfect yet (in fact, so far it's usually either beat them up or ignore the situation).

There are a few models that I like more than others; Philly's Pissed and Philly Stands Up have been organizations that I admire. I hear pretty often that people have objections to them, but so far I haven't heard any specific objections that I think are valid (other than that what they do just doesn't work, which is the problem with every other model too). Insofar as they generally try to support the survivor and hold the perpetrator accountable, I think they're doing a better job than nearly everyone else.

Problems that have been arising that I don't have any solutions to:

- What happens when people outside the community harm people inside it? We can apply our models to the situation, but we seem to mostly sound like crazy aliens to them with all of our unstated assumptions, and since we aren't calling the cops, what do they care?
- What do we do about the few situations that seem like they truly are instances of mutual abuse?
- What about large anarchist gatherings, where we have to deal with fucked-up incidents involving people who may be anarchists but aren't in our immediate communities, whose own communities

that the perpetrator never does it again, that it never happens to them again, and that they have what they need to heal—reasonable-enough requests. That dismisses the problem from a practical perspective, but as long as we're discussing it, let's deal with the principle as well: I would support them if they wanted the perpetrator killed. I am not a pacifist. I'll discuss this more later, but my point for now is this: survivors can make any demands they want to. Support them as far as you feel morally able to, and past that, stand back. Your qualms do not mean an oppressed person's rights may be restricted. And while a loving, gentle approach may be the best thing for the perpetrator to see what they've done and want to change, that does not mean that survivors have to allow them that, any more than they have to forgive them.

Whether or not the perpetrator gets that depends on their behavior and the community's grace.

Confidentiality is key. Do not talk about anyone's situation to anyone else without their permission. At best, you may just break their trust during an incredibly vulnerable time for them; at worst, you may physically endanger them. This also applies to taking action. You may want to kick some rapist ass, but is that what the survivor wants? Would that just endanger them? Use the totally

anarchist scenes (and I say “scenes” because that’s what I mean), and the kind we envision for our whole society.

sweet anarcho-security-culture skillz you

acquired while learning about protests and shit, rather than about unimportant issues like fighting sexual assault.

- BDSM, when consensual, is not rape. Sex work, when consensual, is not rape except possibly in the most removed of all theoretical senses. You insult sex workers, people who are into BDSM, and survivors by claiming otherwise in a general sense, although of course you can make your own choices about what happens in your life.

There are lots of good zines out there advising you on how to best support someone when they’ve been assaulted; I won’t try to replicate their efforts. My personal favorite is *Support*, edited by Cindy Crab and available through Microcosm Publishing. I also really like , *said the pot to the kettle* (by Magpie and available through tangledwilderness.org) for general rightheaded thinking about assault.

You see how I spent a lot of time back there talking about the survivor, and not the perpetrator? That’s because to me, at the moment they commit the assault, perpetrators become to me roughly equivalent to the police. I spend some time thinking about how to avoid cops, or even how much I hate cops (especially when they hurt my friends), but not so much about them as individual people, or how they’re really good folks who

what happens now

The anarchists I know tend to pick and choose who is part of their community, whether by social rejection or outright hostility, depending on the way people act and their beliefs. Cops are the least welcome; Republicans or businesspeople or yuppies are down there too. While anarchists may make token attempts to be friends with homeless people, or at least to be nice to them, they also probably don’t hang out with them or have them over for dinner unless they’re traveler kids. People who identify as anarchists are more welcome; people who are young anarchopunk who know your friends and went to that protest you were also at and share your critique of a particular author are the most welcome.

This tendency, while to some extent itself unjust, makes justice in the community easier in the sense that most of those people had to share your cultural values and overt behaviors in order to be accepted in the first place, and so things like verbalized homophobia or overt racism or (at least non-drunk) violence don’t happen as often. The problems are still there, but they’re easier to ignore, and things are just subtly shitty in that way that’s hard to pin down, or easy to talk about but hard to address. The othering of “bad people” is easier. Sexual assault and domestic violence seem to be the two

inevitably become brutal and act out their own oppressive beliefs in their jobs. They are arrested for things that may or may not actually harm anyone, and while they may or may not have actually done them; so they are already penalized for often doing nothing wrong. They are found guilty or not guilty by a generalized system that has little basis in reality or hope at accuracy, founded in bias. They are sentenced to total confinement for huge sections of their lives, usually with no real attempt at rehabilitation, so that the capitalist system can profit off their slave labor. Imprisoned people are disproportionately poor and of color, and they receive the harshest penalties. In short, this system is nothing short of an atrocity, and I would never wish it on anyone.

In trying to break free from this system and find new ways of dealing with this problem, there has been a lot of confusion. Some people try to start from scratch, working only from their political beliefs; some do it from practical experience, or take an insurrectionary approach; some do it by looking at how non-dominant cultures do justice, which I see as both smart and problematic in terms of appropriation and (albeit celebratory) objectification. I support these attempts in the sense that, while we may not know what we're doing, at least it's not prison or the almost worse things that preceded it in European culture.

There are two different kinds of anarchist justice I want to talk about: the kind that happens now in U.S.

are just doing something wrong, or how I can gently guide them to quit being cops and be awesome anarchists instead. My feeling on cops is that if, one day, a cop has the magical realization that they really don't want to beat people up and be a tool for state repression anymore, they'll fucking quit and try to reform their life. If that happens, good for them; we won't shoot them in the revolution. If I become sure that they mean it, that they're really trying to work on their shit and aren't just being sneaky, maybe I'll even be their friend. But I'm not going to start a fan club for them trying to be a decent person. We should all be doing that. Instead I'm going to put my energy into supporting survivors of police brutality, of the "justice" system, and people who choose to fight the police as individuals or as an institution. So far, I've never heard of a cop reforming themselves, but I know at least two perpetrators who have. To me, that means there's hope. So, on that topic...

what to do if you are called out for assault

Again, these are the things I think one absolutely must do in order to be a reasonable person, but they also have a practical survival purpose for you, the perpetrator. While denying that you did anything wrong, condemning the survivor, and trying to rally support for yourself may instinctively feel like a good way to defend yourself, in my eyes and the eyes of the people trying to hold you accountable it will only show that you are an unrepentant scumfuck. Instead, try these things.

- Acknowledge the truth of the survivor's statements. If you truly do not feel that you committed specific actions, understand that

- different people experience things differently, and that the survivor experienced the harm whether or not you think you committed it. It's entirely likely that you didn't have bad intentions, but that does not mean that you didn't rape them. This is why good, clear communication is so important before and during sexual interaction.

- Apologize, sincerely and thoroughly, both to the survivor and to the community, and understand that your apology alone is not enough. You can show your remorse and grief, if you feel them, but do not use your emotions to make the situation about you.

- Think thoroughly, deeply, and with the aid of books, zines, and conversations with people who are comfortable talking to you about it, about where what you have done comes from, without denying your essential agency in the situation.

- Think about the influences in your life that have encouraged you to not value consent and the person you assaulted, and think about how to rid yourself of them and actively fight against them as societal forces. As white people must work

anarchism if those kinds of personal revelations don't happen on a large scale.

Having been fucked is no excuse for being fucked up.

one day this will all come down.
one day this will all come crashing right down.
so go on with your life

one day this will all come down.
-blackbird raum, "honey in the hair"

section three: anarchist justice

This is going to be one of those irritating attempts by someone who isn't familiar enough with what's already been written on the topic to reinvent the wheel. Sorry about that.

I see the basic conflict of anarchist justice to be as follows: exerting power over another person to control some aspect of their behavior is undesirable, but behavior that hurts other individuals or the whole community is repulsive. For a community to stay cohesive, safe, and healthy, there must be some sort of system to deal with hurtful behavior that is effective, but dominates the perpetrator in as few ways as possible.

Aside from the few people I know who come from cultures with different ways of conducting justice, we have all grown up with the U.S. "justice" system as our only model of doing things: people are arrested by the police, who act in that role for many years and

that is hurting the people around them for an unjustifiable reason (like rape). This is accountability. This is loving your friends. This is defending your friends. This is anarchism. When it happens to you, it's important to listen and take it seriously, and to see it as an act of love rather than as attack.

It can be attack, though. It's attack when it comes from power towards oppression. It's attack when it is designed to dismiss an original, valid critique. For example, it is never okay to tell an angry survivor that they need to get over their anger and move on; it is okay to tell an angry survivor that it's fucked-up for them to hit their friends out of that anger. This is a complicated issue that is different in every situation, and there is no rule of thumb I can think of to use with every one, other than to think honestly and thoroughly about each situation, and to not try to reduce its complexity.

Let me state again that accountability works better and only ever completely when you do it to yourself. Thinking consistently and frequently about the ways in which you are fucked up, without excusing yourself by reason of how you've been fucked over, is important: those situations are different, and healing means thinking about that. No rapist ever truly changes their way of thinking and heals except through their own will, although listening to other people sometimes brings those revelations. We could kill every cop and statesperson and capitalist in the world, and still not have

against racism to be anti-racist, men against sexism to be anti-sexist, so must you work against assault and the things that inform it.

- Change your actions. Value other people, and treat them with respect. If you need to refrain from sex or romantic relationships, if you need to warn the people you come into close contact with that you are a rapist, if you think counseling would help, do it. Although it is painful, it's better than continuing to rape people. Above all else, listen to the survivor's demands, and try to fully and thoroughly respect them. Never question them or try to find loopholes, or only obey the letter of the law.

Capitalist justice has never truly sought to rehabilitate people, only to punish and cow them enough to become profitable workers again. The long history of legal injustice towards cases of rape only confirms this: the survivor, if believed at all, never receives what they truly want to feel whole and safe again, and the perpetrator, if found guilty at all, is only punished and locked away, never again to emerge, a pariah in the eyes of all society. Prison rape itself is seen as a part of the punitive process, rather than as the atrocity it is.

With restorative community justice, there is a chance at last for the survivor to get the support they need, and for the perpetrator to redeem themselves and return to

with a short person standing next to them on a hill.
Logic, people, seriously.

being a functioning, respected, even loved and happy member of the community. So if you as a perpetrator feel unwilling to cooperate with an accountability process, or grow lazy in holding yourself accountable, remember that the process is for you. We want to be able to love you again, we want everyone to be able to heal, we want things to be better. To complain in the face of the opportunity you're being given is absurd. Clearly accountability processes aren't going to be perfect; we're all amateurs, after all, and trying not to repeat the fucked-up shit we all learned. But whether or not it works and helps you depends in large part on your willingness to change.

preventing assault, ending rape culture

Of course, the fundamental approach to stopping assault is for every single person to make a firm commitment to do everything in their power to not hurt each other except in self-defense, and to then act on that commitment. Practically, this means exploring the following concepts, and talking to each other often about them, making them a part of our lives.

- communication:

We all need to talk about these things all the time, and we all need to interact with each other more sincerely, to get rid of our assumptions and expectations and deal with each other the way we

the ends justify the means

If this part is seen as qualifying everything else I've said, I will be sad. I believe that everything I've said so far is true; I also believe what I'm about to say is true. I am trying to say it in the spirit of honesty and completeness; please try to take it that way.

I think that at least one-third of anarchist practice (the other two parts being attacking evil institutions and building alternative ones, but that's another zine) should be self-examination: trying to improve as a person, making sure that your actions have a good and true basis. As Good Clean Fun once said, this is just so important whether you're having intercourse or playing golf. Ultimately you are accountable only to yourself (and God, if you believe in that sort of thing), for what you do and why.

Here's the tricky part: for the most part, this accountability needs to be an internal process. Telling someone else in a specific way that they're being fucked up is a delicate and often damaging process. If you aren't careful, people become alienated and never even examine the problem in the first place; if you get aggressive with it, it either becomes some kind of creepy Communist mutual critique session, or someone just gets their ribs broken without learning anything. Sometimes you have to try anyway, usually when someone is acting in a way

want to be important and get to arbitrate for the whole community! THEY MUST BE STOPPED

It's kinda surprising how easy it is to fall for this one, given how blatantly untrue it is. First of all, no one ever got popular by fighting rape. Every force in society serves it, and they don't like being threatened. Secondly, why did the rapist have all that power in the first place? I thought we were anarchists. Could their excess of power have something to do with their willingness to rape people? I wonder. Thirdly, this isn't a monarchy: you don't become the next king by poisoning your predecessor. You get power among anarchists by charisma and scene points, and fighting rape seldom gives you either thing. Finally, most people working against assault don't want to become judge and jury, giving a revolutionary critique to everyone on the block; they just want bad shit to stop happening. Maybe you should try helping them.

- truly are. Of course, we need to leave each other our privacy, but polite questions spoken from a place of caring are usually easy to answer or decline. Have you ever asked the people you sleep with if they're survivors, and if so, what they need from you? Does your community space have an agreement that perpetrators who are not being accountable are not welcome? Have you told your comrades that you would far rather work with even a Communist than an unrepentant rapist? Bringing your beliefs, feelings, thoughts and experiences into the light and having dialogues about them is fundamental.
- consent:
 - Some people believe that female-socialized people (at least) can never truly give consent to intercourse with male-socialized people because of our history of oppression. On a pure, abstract level, I can find some truth in that. Nonetheless, most of us do give consent in our lives, and certainly believe we are giving it freely and willingly. Practically, on a daily basis of interaction, I think that clear verbal consent accompanied by positive nonverbal cues, check-ins, close attention to each other for signs of discomfort, and sometimes safewords, are the best that we can do and far more than most of us actually do.

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equality means the same

It's been said before, but it bears saying again: we are all very different people with different experiences and reasons for acting the way we do, having experienced different forms of oppression and power. We want to treat each other equally, and that's good: but because we are all different, equality means different things in different situations. This is why affirmative action makes sense and is not charity or discrimination; this is why a tall person standing in a valley can be level

The way our culture portrays sex doesn't make it easy to ask for consent: rape is sexy, passionate wordless unnnegotiated sex is the ideal, and

everyone has mutual orgasms from intercourse alone every time (and of course intercourse = sex).

Bullshit, all of it, and the more you talk about sex the better it will be, no matter how awkward and difficult it is at first. It's certainly better than realizing that you've raped someone for want of a conversation, or even just the gray-area sex where no one is calling it rape but you didn't enjoy yourself and feel shitty afterwards.

Let all of the sex you have be great, wanted, safe sex.

examining privilege, defeating privilege:

We fight for equality for all, and try to make it real in our communities, but we do not come from equal places... and equality does not mean "the same", in any case. We all have different amounts and kinds of privilege, and have all experienced oppression in different ways. We have to be careful not to oversimplify, not fall into the pitfalls of useless guilt, to acknowledge responsibility and to take action. It's pretty easy to say these things, but when you think actively about applying them to your life, it calls for nothing less than full-scale personal and social revolution.

establishment used their compassion and intention to

support survivors along the way towards ending DV to manipulate them into becoming just a social service, state-run and, while helpful to survivors, ultimately no threat to the larger problem. We have to find a way to stop this from happening.

As for simply not wanting to deal with it, is it because you're a survivor and you feel unsafe, or only because it makes you feel uncomfortable? While some folks have legitimate reasons for not getting involved, others may find that it's good to feel uncomfortable sometimes, to stretch yourself and deal with things that are important to other people instead of to you.

the earth is being raped

The earth is being devastated, polluted, covered in asphalt, demolished, poisoned, drained, stripped, and generally destroyed. It is not being raped. Stop it, seriously, you are a fucking embarrassment to the entire ecofeminist movement every time this phrase comes out of your mouth. I know I use comparisons to other struggles in this zine, and I know that it's problematic to do so. You don't seem to.

rapists are persecuted by people wanting power

Here's some great backwards logic used by rapists' supporters through the years. Those vindictive feminists are on a witchhunt against this poor defenseless person because they are jealous of their power! They just

• people are coming from with this, but I still find it fallacious. If drama is useless emotional upheaval, side-taking, and conflict in a community, and we all instead unite to deal with the situation and firmly resist dramatic behavior, there won't be drama. I also see this as a dismissal of the importance of the situation: no one would call organizing for a strike at your workplace drama because it is Very Important Political Work. So is this. The personal is political, and it's called social anarchism for a reason. (If you're not a social anarchist, just pretend for a second.)

All struggles are interconnected; even if you only do environmental organizing in your community, assault within it still has something to do with you. One of the reasons so many people are invested in the fight against breast cancer (as problematic as that fight is) is that almost everyone knows someone who has suffered from it. That's even truer of rape, and where are the sorority 5k walks against it? Where are the ribbons and plastic bracelets? Fighting breast cancer is a good outlet for members of a capitalist society, because it allows you to feel generous and productive without actually directly affecting anything. Rape is a more dangerous issue: we could stop it if we all tried, and then where would social control be? People would feel safe! They could talk to their neighbors! Equality of the sexes might mean something! It would be **anarchy**. The teeth have been pulled from the first wave of the anti-domestic violence movement precisely because it was so dangerous. The

- fighting rape culture:

Actively spreading these and other ideas.

Resisting the normalization of rape. Looking out for each other. Fighting isolation. Fighting war and domination. Resisting all forms of oppression. Spreading happy healthy loving ways of being with each other. Upping truth and beauty, ending despair and lies. I could write a million more examples, but I think you know what I mean.

section two: things with which I disagree

I'm going to start by talking about specific points people have made that I disagree with, and move on to some more general remarks about anarchist justice as a whole.

splinter in the community's eye, beam in the perpetrator's

People often object to trying to get a perpetrator to be accountable on the basis of our larger guilt: we all come from a rape culture, we all have had non-explicitly-consensual sex, we all have internalized patriarchy. Some of us trying to hold the person accountable are probably ourselves survivors, since so many people are these days, and may be acting on the basis of the things we've learned from our original situations. Some of us may

have never liked the perpetrator. The perpetrator may be from a less privileged position than those trying to hold them accountable (the situation most actually troubling to me, and definitely worth thinking through).

However, none of those things let the perpetrator off the hook. None of them mitigates the fact that they committed a wrong act, that they betrayed someone and injured them in the most intimate way you can be hurt. There is no mitigation here, except maybe with a mental inability to understand consent. While we should all be critiquing ourselves, understanding our own motivations, and trying constantly to act from a place of sincerity, we should also not let our own flaws stop us from meeting our responsibilities. Far from finding survivors inadequate to these situations, I think we can be uniquely fitted for dealing with them—who knows what it's like better than us? But we should only work on accountability processes if we choose to. Just as emotional labor so often becomes women's work in the anarchist scene, so do people come to see work around assault as a survivor's forte. Sometimes that work can be excruciatingly painful and harmful to us. It is not people of color's job to stop racism; it is not survivors' job to stop rape. That's why I also think it's important for perpetrators to organize against assault, providing that they're doing it out of sincerity and not to get points.

let he who is without sin

Just to continue with the Bible theme, people trying to get off the hook everywhere like to quote the

an attempt to look at the situation as a whole, to act with total fairness, to holistically fix it. What I see instead is blaming the survivor. One might say that if the survivor hadn't been wearing a short skirt, hadn't talked back, hadn't been a woman, hadn't kissed the perpetrator, hadn't initiated the encounter, had stayed sober, had said no, had physically resisted, had called the cops, the rape wouldn't have happened, and in some cases you might even be right, in a literal sense. Without each particular circumstance along the way, the rapist may not have decided to do it. But, and I cannot emphasize this enough, that **does not make the rape the survivor's fault**. The perpetrator was just as free to ask for consent, to ask if they were okay, to take their cues as a no. To care. To want to have sex only with a consenting, clearheaded, participating person. You may unknowingly build your house on an earthquake faultline, but does that make losing your home your fault? And at least earthquakes aren't caused by people; rape is. This is not a logic problem, not a weather pattern, but an interaction between human beings, and you cannot reduce it to abstractions that remove blame. To do so is nearly as monstrous and destructive as the rape itself.

i don't want to deal with drama

When specific situations are mentioned, I hear a lot of people say that they are against drama and so are avoiding it, or that they prefer to focus on other kinds of political work. I can to a certain extent appreciate where

people who are already at enhanced risk'), when you condemn a movement only because they are willing to use violence in self-defense, then you are an accomplice to the state and capitalism and a traitor to the people, and ought to be shot down like partridges. (Sorry, I couldn't help myself.)

Maybe, in some total vacuum, it is objectively an immoral act to use any violence. But people die every day. People die from pollution, from despair, from murder, from capitalist greed, from state repression. Given that reality, I feel that violence in self-defense is justified. There's a lot of superstitious belief that tools that have been used to commit evil are themselves inherently evil, like technology or violence... or penises, for example. To me, it's the way that tools are used that can be evil, and the reasons behind them. Guns may kill people, but someone has to squeeze the trigger, and sometimes motherfuckers need to get shot. Context is all. I do believe that unconsensual sex and torture are always wrong. A lot of other things are pretty sketchy (killing people is to me never always right or always wrong), and to be personally and communally discussed and thought about and decided on (prison is historically an atrocity, but is forcible isolation wrong under all circumstances?). I don't have all of the answers.

line "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." That originally referred to someone who had committed adultery. I guess that having sex with someone in a way that violates the rules of your primary relationship is harmful to that primary partner, but I ultimately see it as a more-or-less victimless crime. Rape is not a victimless crime. Murder is not a victimless crime. They are acts of interpersonal violence, of power and control, informed by the forces that, as an anarchist, I am dedicated to opposing. So while I think there are probably more helpful ways of dealing with rape than stoning, I don't think that our flaws should prevent us from action in most cases. People also like to talk about not knowing an absolute right and who are they to judge: I feel that you don't have to have every answer to know that rape is wrong. We'll figure it out as we move forward.

the cycle of violence

I received training as an advocate for survivors of domestic violence. During my training, I learned that the concept of the cycle of violence originated in DV work, and refers to the pattern of abuse often seen in violent relationships. That cycle is usually a period of brewing tension, eventually turning into a violent explosion, then a 'honeymoon' period while the perpetrator woos the survivor into not leaving them. That turns into tension, and the cycle repeats itself, often escalating each time.

What people not familiar with domestic violence often mean by 'cycle of violence' is something like this: person A commits a violent act against person B, who

it's their fault for living in New Orleans

There's a larger attitude that's been troubling me, one that poses as (and maybe even believes itself to be)

responds violently to A. Depending on the situation, A may then violently retaliate against B, who will respond, and things may escalate. This is the ‘cycle of violence’, that we have to ‘end’.

Bullshit. First of all, it strikes me as just fucking typical that people would steal a term used to describe actual perpetrator vs. survivor violence and use it to condemn self-defense. Secondly, how often would that scenario even fucking happen? Maybe in a barfight, where two people seem evenly matched; but even then most people would intervene in favor of the person who was struck first. In any reasonable community situation, people tend to side with the person who was originally hurt, and in the face of their overwhelming disapproval and the potential consequences, the initiator cuts it out. The fact that it’s even possible that people don’t side with the survivor is believable to me only after years of seeing extremely depressing shit.

In a solitary situation, if the survivor is able to take defensive action for themselves, the perpetrator may respond with anger and more force and overpower the survivor; they may be too surprised to respond with more force, bringing things to a standstill; or the survivor may succeed in escaping from the situation. I don’t see how either of those last two scenarios is bad, and the first is just a tactical mistake rather than morally wrong. I don’t see how the situation changes at a distance. I don’t see how people can ignore the entire context and history of what has happened—it’s like objecting to Palestinians

throwing rocks at Israeli tanks. I know that people also call that the cycle of violence, and I know that they are just as fucking wrong and stupid to do so.

pacifism

Let’s talk about pacifism for a minute, because I feel like it’s related. So, I don’t know much about the history of pacifism as practiced by people other than well-off white liberals in the United States, which is my own ignorant fault. However, I hear that the whole thing originated with oppressed people who found nonviolence to be a good tactic to struggle for their freedom. I certainly can’t judge that. I also believe that when you come from a place of privilege, you should refrain from committing violent acts against those less privileged than you, and should actively work to end conditions of oppression and violence in solidarity with those people. After the revolution or whatever, I hope for peace and flowers and kittens and all kinds of nice things to ensue.

Usually when whiteys tell me that they’re pacifists, though, what they mean is that, while coming from a place of privilege, they are against **anyone** using property destruction, force, violence, or impoliteness in self-defense. I define self-defense as “acting against those who oppress you”, and I am in favor of it. I feel that when a privileged person is a pacifist, they are at least useless and at most also the enemy. When you turn in eco-activists to the police, when you stop someone from smashing the window of an evil corporation (without a good reason, like ‘that action would endanger